

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 17, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker:

My Administration is committed to providing the resources needed to ensure that veterans, including those returning from current combat operations, receive the quality care and services they deserve.

In the FY 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act, P.L. 110-161, \$3,691,391,000 was designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement contingent upon a formal budget request by me that includes designation of the entire amount as an emergency requirement. While I believe that these funds should have been considered as regular appropriations, the men and women who have sacrificed for our country should not be held hostage to budgetary wrangling in Washington. Therefore, to provide these funds in a timely manner I hereby request and designate as an emergency requirement the \$3,691,391,000, consistent with P.L. 110-161.

Additional information on this action is set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George W. Bush", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Enclosure



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

THE DIRECTOR

January 17, 2008

The President
The White House

Submitted for your consideration is a recommendation to request and designate as an emergency requirement \$3,691,391,000 for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), consistent with P.L. 110-161.

In the FY 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act, which you signed on December 26, 2007, Congress passed a level of funding equal to your request, as well as an additional \$3,691,391,000 to be available if requested and designated as an emergency requirement by January 18, 2008.

The components of this additional FY 2008 funding are:

- \$2.5 billion for medical care to be spent on the following:
 - various new initiatives, such as expanded access to care in rural areas and increased reimbursement for travel;
 - one-time facility maintenance requirements;
 - purchase of high-tech equipment; and
 - new initiatives addressing care of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, including mental health and homelessness.
- \$69 million for research focusing on treatment options for the needs of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans, including post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.
- \$133 million to hire over 1,000 full time equivalent (FTE) personnel to improve the timeliness and accuracy of VA's disability claims processing.
- \$107 million for information technology staffing, software development, and computers and other hardware to support: 1) the increased number of disability claims processors; and 2) additional outpatient clinics.

- \$739 million for construction to expand and improve VA's medical care infrastructure and to address various cemetery and benefits construction projects.
- \$88 million for grants to States for construction of State cemeteries and long-term care facilities
- \$28 million to renovate national cemetery gravesites.
- \$8 million for the Inspector General to expand oversight of medical care and information security.

I recommend that you designate this request as an emergency requirement in accordance with the provisions of Public Law 110-161. No further congressional action will be required.

I have carefully reviewed this proposal and I join the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs in recommending that you transmit this request to the Congress.

Sincerely,



Jim Nussle
Director